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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 1909.

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THE FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS¹

THE American Society of Naturalists was founded, under the name of The Society of Naturalists of the Eastern United States, in 1884, by a group of the leading biologists of the day. Some of these have long since passed away. Others yet remain with us and are among the most active and most distinguished representatives of biological science in America to-day.

The motives underlying this movement are not difficult to discover. They are to be found in the great trend toward an intense specialization which at that time began to attract wide-spread attention and called for great concentration of effort and more exacting methods; in the rapid development of a refined and precise technique; in a growing demand for improved science teaching in schools, and in an appreciation of the fact that the arbitrary distinctions hitherto maintained between the two great schools of biological research must shortly disappear in joint efforts toward the solution of the great problems of life. The logical outcome of this point of view necessitated careful consideration of the relations in which the new order of scientific thought and progress must stand toward methods of research and the constitution of societies and academies of science.

But above all, it became a matter of first importance to determine the relations of the new order to the rising generation and through them to the future specialist and scientist. In other words, it became clear that the methods of science teaching must

¹ Presidential address delivered at the Baltimore meeting, December 31, 1908.